



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BISHOP URGES FEMA TO RESPOND TO LOCAL NEEDS AFTER OCTOBER STORMS

Congressman Sends Letters to FEMA and USDA Heads Requesting Assistance

CORAM, NY - In a letter to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Congressman Tim Bishop requested assistance in response to the torrential rains and wind storms that wreaked havoc across Long Island in October, especially Suffolk County. Bishop's letter follows emergency declarations by Suffolk County and New York State.

Following the storm, an inventory of damage was taken, and it exceeded the \$22 million the state needs to ask for federal assistance. On November 23, Governor George Pataki requested federal disaster aid from FEMA.

"More than 6,000 Long Island families and businesses who reported damage need help from the federal government," Bishop said. "While I understand that FEMA has many other priorities, our needs should not go ignored."

Nearly two feet of rain fell over the course of fifteen days in Suffolk County, ending with a spectacularly devastating wallop from a combined force of the season's first nor'easter and remnants of Hurricane Wilma. An estimated 6,000 homes in Suffolk County were reported damaged, while the county's infrastructure estimated nearly \$8 million in damages.

Bishop also sent a letter to the Department of Agriculture Secretary earlier this month requesting a plan to assist local farming families and vintners after the storms that devastated some vegetable and wine harvests.

Bishop sent the following letter to the Acting Director of FEMA:

R. David Paulison
Acting Director FEMA/U.S. Fire Administrator
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Acting Director Paulison,

I am writing to urge that you make a disaster declaration for portions of New York State recently devastated by coastal flooding. A few weeks ago, the south shore of Long Island, particularly large portions of Suffolk County, experienced massive flooding and significant storm damage including erosion.

Officials at the town, county and New York State level, declared the situation an emergency and petitioned your office for full disaster assistance. Many homes and businesses throughout Long Island suffered massive damage as a result of flooding and erosion. Unfortunately, this storm could not have come at a worse time. Long Island recently endured its first nor'easter of the season, and the shore will be battered by new storms for months to come.

Following your office's recent inspection of the damages, I now request that FEMA provide assistance to meet the immediate needs of effected New Yorkers. I know that your agency currently faces a significant workload, which is why I very much appreciate any assistance that FEMA can offer. I wish that under current circumstances that other needs could wait, but for thousands of New York families, that is no longer possible.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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